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AFGHANISTAN

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FACT SHEET

Afghanistan Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP)

OVERVIEW

Afghanistan is confronting a severe challenge in diagnosing and controlling disease outbreaks. The country lacks sufficient medical personnel with a background in epidemiology and faces high rates of infectious disease transmission. Many of these diseases can be passed from animals to humans (zoonotic diseases), which is a significant threat in a country in which an estimated 80 percent of citizens are engaged in agriculture.

In response to a request from the Afghan Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) to build capacity for epidemiology in 2008, USAID is funding the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to develop a Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP) in Afghanistan. The two-year program is designed for health professionals in entry- or mid-level positions and will build their capacity in applied epidemiology, surveillance, and enhanced public health practices. In particular, the program will focus on priority zoonotic diseases including anthrax, Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever, brucellosis, rabies, plague, and tuberculosis, in cooperation with animal health partners at the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL).

Through this program, the MoPH and the MAIL will acquire the means to build their own programs and capacity to improve public health on local, regional, and national levels, ultimately leading to improved health on a global scale.

ACTIVITIES

- **Field Epidemiology Training Program** – Developing a comprehensive training program for infectious disease monitoring and control in Afghanistan.
- **Study tours** – Enabling Afghan health professionals to study at the established FETP in Pakistan.

RESULTS

- A general course in basic epidemiology was conducted by four CDC experts for 19 MoPH staff in July 2009.
- The first of two zoonotic disease training courses was held in August 2009 in Kabul for approximately 10 provincial rapid response teams. A follow-up contact session, which will include a field-based training component, is planned for December 2009.
- Three Afghans – two public health officers from the MoPH and one veterinarian from the MAIL – have been selected to train in the Pakistan FETP. The training is scheduled to start at the end of October 2009.
- Approximately 70 Afghans, including national health program managers, medical officers, surveillance officers, veterinarians, and laboratory technicians, participated in trainings on principles of outbreak investigation and disease surveillance.

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